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Coxwood

The World's Most Exquisite Living Antique

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Department of Agriculture



~ S.B. ELLIOT ~
Belle Meade ~ Virginia

Boxwood



LET US RESCUE FROM THE OBLIVION
OF TANGLED GARDENS THE BOX-
WOOD WHICH REMAINS UNCHER-
ISHED, FOR BY THE CHARM OF ITS
ANTIQUITY, ITS OLDTIME AROMATIC
FRAGRANCE, ITS DEEP, RICH PEREN-
NIAL GREEN, WE CAN GIVE ANY
DOMICILE A DIGNITY, A GRANDEUR,
AN AIR OF DISTINCTION, THAT WILL
MARK IT FROM OTHER HOMES

S. B. ELLIOT
BELLE MEADE FARM
BELLE MEADE
VIRGINIA



A SECTION OF THE JAMES A. BURDEN GARDEN AT SYOSSET,
L. I., NOTED FOR ITS BOXWOOD, THE BEAUTY AND CHARM
OF WHICH CAN BE BUT INADEQUATELY CONVEYED BY AN
ILLUSTRATION.

I want you to know how delighted I am with all the Boxwood from Belle Meade Farm. It makes a wonderful showing. Thank you for all the personal care and interest you have taken in handling it.

ADELE BURDEN (Mrs. James A. Burden),
Woodside, Syosset, Long Island, N. Y.

There is something so sturdy and settled and permanent about boxwood that merely a few clumps can give to a whole garden an atmosphere of being rooted there for years.

Men have planned and designed and builded and failed in the end until there was added the final touch of boxwood to give an atmosphere of home, of permanency and distinction.

Boxwood Enriches Beautiful Estates



THE beauty of large estates is the result of careful planning, no matter how deliberately informal the grounds may appear. The secret of the attractiveness of many of the more beautiful estates is the skillful planting of fine, old Boxwood. No discriminating owner of a large home can afford to overlook the unique characteristics of Boxwood. It is to shrubbery what the old masterpieces are to pictures, antiques to furniture, Russian sables to furs, and should be considered and cherished accordingly.

Boxwood is in fact one of Nature's masterpieces and like other things of this sort can never become commonplace. At first glance one would not perhaps realize the many years which any but the smallest specimens require to develop. There is no possible short cut which could ever lead to mass production of this shrub and so cause it to lose its distinctiveness. This is an important consideration in a period when most things become popular only to be swamped by a flood of cheap and crude imitations.

Those planning new homes recently have shown increasing appreciation of the speed and ease

with which a dignified atmosphere may be created by the use of suitable specimens of old Boxwood. Far too often, recently built country homes present an appearance conspicuously new and bare. This regrettable situation is in large measure unnecessary. Choice specimens, which have required years to produce, at once appear firmly established in their new locations. The purchase of antique furnishings for the interior is quite the usual thing and transplanting of Boxwood should be and often is the outdoor equivalent.

Old World Gardens Rich with Boxwood

To think of Mount Vernon is to recall the old Box garden laid out by George Washington when a young man. On the other hand, this shrub was used for centuries in the Old World gardens.

Since the time of Lord Bacon, Boxwood has been characteristic of English gardens and has been universally used. It is suitable for the carrying out of four traditional ideas on which such gardens are based. The plan is designed to produce a garden which is enjoyable throughout the year, harmonizing with the rectangular shape of a Tudor home, supplying a contrast between the dark green and the brighter colors of the flowers and appealing to the sense of smell as well as to the sense of sight. Both the tree box and the dwarf variety are used.

The larger French gardens are constructed with almost mathematical precision and every detail is planned with a definite purpose. The slow growth



A BEAUTIFUL SECTION OF THE FAMOUS GARDEN OF
MR. AND MRS. HERBERT L. PRATT AT GLEN COVE, LONG
ISLAND, SHOWING A FINE BOXWOOD TREATMENT.

which is so typical of Boxwood is a distinct advantage, since it can more readily be made to retain the desired height and shape. The most important use is for contrast with the flowers and the many garden ornaments which are characteristic of this type of garden. The object of the gardener is to seek a happy medium between shade and openness, while creating an illusion of greater than actual size.

The true Italian gardens of today are copied from the famous ones established about the villas of the sixteenth century. Unfortunately many so classified are crude imitations cluttered up with cheap garden ornaments. Their attractiveness is partly due to the skillful blending of Art and Nature. An essential feature is the clipping of the Box-trees to form fantastic shapes. During the Renaissance these ideas influenced English gardeners and in fact, they

sometimes copied Italian gardens in great detail. Later these principles reached the Colonies and were incorporated in many old American gardens.

Therefore, it will please those with a preference for the Colonial or the European traditions. Because of its history, it may be appropriately employed in different forms in connection with any style of architecture. In any situation its perennial green, glistening leaves with their bitter-sweet fragrance will prove equally cheerful and fresh. In the long, grey months of winter its brightness will prove attractive, particularly when snow covers the ground.

Suggestions for the Use of Boxwood

Boxwood may be utilized in various ways. English Dwarf Boxwood (*Buxus Suffruticosa*) is almost essential as an edging in the strictly formal garden and covers a wide scope in the planting scheme. Tree Box (*Buxus Semperfivens*) has many uses. In the garden large specimens give height, mellowness and age, while serving as a rich background against which the colors of the flowers flare gaily in contrast. Like Dwarf Box it may be used as a hedge along walks and along the walls of house or garage. Individual specimens appear to advantage set here and there about the grounds.

Many modern homes are built without large porches and the result is frequently a bare appearance, particularly at the doorway. The use of a fine old Boxwood specimen at each side will immediately give an atmosphere of home, of permanency and distinction.



A RUGGED FIELD STONE HOME BEAUTIFIED WITH BOXWOOD
AND SHOWING ITS GRACE AND DIGNITY IN COMPARISON
WITH OTHER PERENNIALS.

Of course, interest in Boxwood is by no means confined to the newer estates. It is rarely the case that there is not abundant opportunity to use individual bushes, even though the more formal arrangements are complete. Furthermore, there are frequently walks along which hedges could be placed to advantage. Whether the estate is new or old, expenditures along these lines definitely add to the value of the property. As more and more of these specimens are transplanted, the prices of those remaining on the original sites will increase and this situation will tend to increase the value of those already transplanted.

For the benefit of those who are interested in botanical details the following description is given:

Description

Box (*L. Buxus*), Boxwood being the wood of the box, but generally used as a distinguishing

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name, is a genus of about thirty species of evergreen shrubs or small trees of the family Buxaceae, and is native to Northern Africa, Southern Europe, Central America, and similar climates in Asia.

The species have small oval and oval-oblong opposite leaves, one-half to one and one-half inches long, of leathery texture and deep rich, glossy green color. Most varieties have inconspicuous, staminate, sessile flowers, in terminal or auxillary clusters, and nearly globular fruits containing six shining black seeds. The color of the new growth of foliage before it has fully hardened is several shades lighter than the old. The leaves are sometimes employed in medicine.

The wood of box is of slow growth, adding not more than one and one-half to two inches to its diameter in twenty years.

Box has a pungent aroma unlike any other odor. It has been described as "that old-time, spicy, bitter-sweet fragrance."

Several species are grown for ornamental purposes, notably *sempervirens*, or tree Box, and *suffruticosa*, or English Dwarf Box. Propagation of tree Box is by cutting from mature wood in early fall. Seeds may be sown after maturity, but it requires a long time to raise plants of good size from them. The dwarf Box is usually propagated by division. It is of slower growth than other varieties and is highly valued for its effect in ornamentation.

Sempervirens Box is of upright growth, sometimes reaching a height of twenty-five feet over a long period. It stands pruning well and is popular for ornamental purposes. It grows more rapidly than



A SECTION OF THE EXQUISITE BOXWOOD GARDEN ON THE
CHARLES D. ARMSTRONG ESTATE AT OSTERVILLE, MASS.

the dwarf variety, under favorable conditions putting out a growth of from three to six inches in a season, so that it is possible to make considerable headway in ornamentation in a comparatively short time.

The value of Box has long been recognized, although there is little actual information on growing it to be found. It was appreciated in Pliny's time and written about by him. Virgil and Ovid make reference to it. For centuries it has been the most valued of shrubbery in European gardens, and in America today there is hardly an architectural scheme that is complete without it.

Belle Meade Box Readily Transplanted

While an attractive feature of Box is the safety with which even large specimens of great age can be

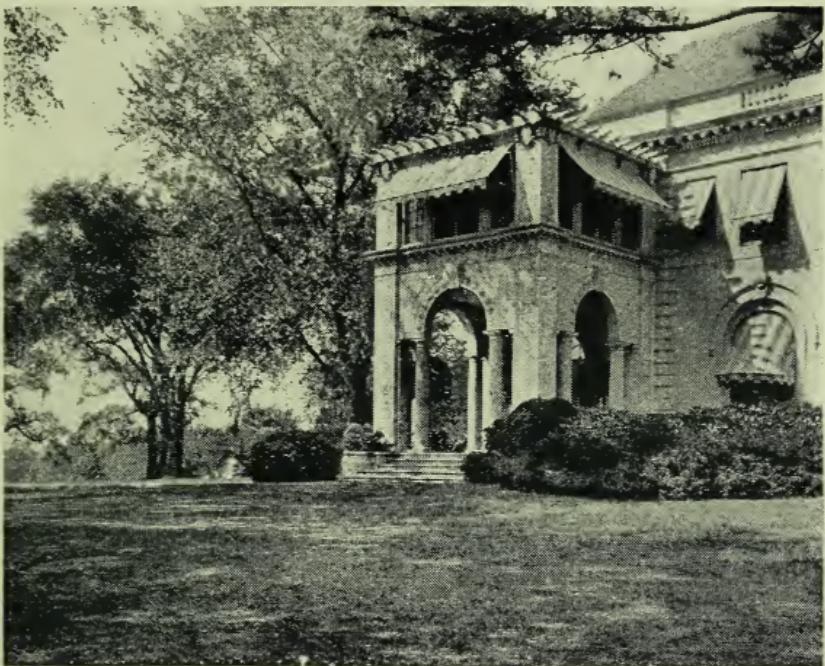
shipped, yet it is highly desirable that they be prepared by competent persons. Our technique has been developed with unusual thoroughness and has stood the test of time.

At Belle Meade Farm, a fine, old hedge of suffruticosa, 400 feet long and up to 8 feet in height and more in spread, was taken up and shipped. This was replanted without losing one bush and the total cost of hedge and work was less than half the bid of a well known firm for the moving alone.

It was taken up with large balls of earth rigidly secured and the entire work of preparing it for shipment was done by Belle Meade workmen. Due to their experience in this work, it can be done thoroughly at a moderate cost. This large hedge, which filled twelve freight cars, has greatly enhanced the value of the estate where it was replanted. Experienced realtors and professional landscapists have stated that its value on this basis was many times its cost.

Other shipments of hedges, clumps and individual specimens totalling many carloads have been sent to Pennsylvania, Michigan, Rhode Island, New York and Massachusetts without the loss of a single bush.

Boxwood may be moved at any time of the year, but it is best to move it after the new growth has hardened and when the weather is most favorable for work in the ground. From July until late fall or in early spring is the best time. If the ground is too wet, the balls of earth around the roots are apt to break up. Freezing weather makes the necessary excavating difficult and might harm the fine roots.



A LUXURIOUS BIT OF PLANTING ON THE ESTATE OF
E. F. LUCKENBACH AT SANDS POINT, LONG ISLAND

The moving of even quite large specimens is perfectly feasible because Boxwood has no tap root, most of the roots being in the upper soil. Thoroughness in preparation for shipment is best assured when an expert, who has an interest at stake, is in charge of the work. The ball of earth should extend well out toward the limit of the branches and should be deep enough to include the roots and to prevent crumbling during moving.

How to Make Boxwood Thrive

Although this type of shrubbery is particularly hardy and vigorous, still there are certain methods of care which will insure securing the best results. It is preferable that the branches be allowed to grow low and shade the ground, since this protects the roots which are mainly near the surface. Where it is not done naturally by the branches, the soil can easily be kept loose and shaded by mulching.

Nature mulches the trees in the forest by successive crops of leaves which, while at first acting only as a mulch, gradually rot and form leaf mold, a fertilizer of great value. The same condition can be produced readily by artificial means. If leaves are not available strawy manure can be used. Worms and insects thrive in the cool, dark, damp soil under the mulch; work it up and make it loose and available as plant food for the fine roots of the Box. Litter used for mulching can be kept from blowing about the ground by a sprinkling of manure or top-soil. The ground about the bush should be flat. If a mound is made it tends to shed the water.

In some Belle Meade Boxwood, that was particularly full and round and rich in color. I noticed that a good many birds were in the habit of roosting. The droppings of birds of all kinds are very rich in nitrogen, and nitrogen is the most valuable element in fertilizer to promote growth and color of leaves. The branches in this Box were full right to the ground and shaded the ground, holding the mulch that collected naturally. This, with the droppings of the birds, had much to do in producing a suffruticosa Box hedge that grew up to seven and eight feet in height and nine and even ten feet in spread with full round, perfect form.

Hen manure is too strong for direct application. When used it should be mixed, at least one to four, with leaf mold, rich top woods soil, peat moss or stable manure. The leaf mold, woods soil and peat moss are acid which is favorable to the boxwood. Horse manure when used should be well rotted. Bovine manure is preferred by some gardeners. But all manure is good. In the absence of manure,



THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL AT WASHINGTON SHOWING THE USE OF BOXWOOD IN THE PLAN OF PERPETUATING BEAUTY AND GRACE.

ready mixed fertilizers for shrubbery can be obtained from any of the dealers and should be used, together with mulching, to produce the best results. But neither manure nor fertilizer should come in direct contact with the roots nor be used in excess.

Fowl should not be allowed in the garden with Boxwood. They scratch away the mulch and expose the fine roots, besides devouring the worms and insects that are necessary in developing plant food for the Box. Hogs, cattle and sheep, by rooting, rubbing and breaking, are all destructive to Boxwood and it should not be exposed to their ravages.

Moisture is, of course, vital to any plant and in the event of a prolonged dry spell or after moving it is desirable to water Box plants. This should be done with moderation and it is well to avoid planting in a poorly drained spot.

Those who desire further details, written from a more technical point of view, concerning Boxwood should consult Bulletin 272, of the University of Maryland, Agricultural Experiment Station, College Park, Maryland and Bulletin 723, of the United States Department of Agriculture. Upon request we will furnish this information and any other facts learned during our long experience in this field.

Prices of Boxwood

The price of Belle Meade Boxwood is most reasonable considering its quality and hardiness and the assurance of skillful preparation for transportation.

It must be remembered that the larger specimens are not grown on a commercial nursery basis, since their planting necessarily took place years ago. In a general way it may be said that height and spread, contour, density and color are important factors in determining values of individual specimens. Hedges are sold by the running foot and also vary in price according to height and breadth, form and quality.

A descriptive list of individual specimens and hedges which are available will be sent immediately to anyone interested. Inquirers will greatly assist in making it clear just what would be suitable for their use if they will mention the approximate sizes, quantities and variety desired. If a general description of how the shrubbery will be arranged is furnished, more specific suggestions can be made as to just what would be appropriate.



OLD BOXWOOD WITH CARE HAS GROWN TO ENORMOUS HEIGHT, AS SHOWN IN THESE SPLENDID SPECIMENS FROM BELLE MEADE FARM.



Boxwood has had much to do in making English gardens lovelier even than their beautiful and mellow old castles, which are after all man-made, while "only God can make a tree."

On zero days boxwood with the perennial green of its glistening leaves will keep the garden living while the world outside is dead.

*Post Office—BELL MEADE, Virginia
Telegraph and Station—MARKHAM, Virginia.*



SHOWING BOXWOOD OF DIFFERENT SIZES GROWING ON
BELLE MEADE FARM.

Testimonials



All the Boxwood was received in excellent condition. Every bale was intact. It is well worth while to have large balls of earth taken up with the plants and securely baled as was this, as it insures their growing without a setback.

CHARLES D. ARMSTRONG, Osterville, Mass.

We wish to express our appreciation of the way in which the Box hedge was handled by you in moving it from Belle Meade, Virginia, to Friendship, D. C. The Box was unusually well dug and baled and arrived at its destination in perfect condition. We do not hesitate to say that this skillful handling of the plants had a great deal to do with the excellent condition in which the hedge appears today—eight months after moving.

JOHN H. SMALL, 3D, *Landscape Architect*,
Washington, D. C.

The moving of the Boxwood hedge has been a great success. Mrs. McLean and I are very much pleased. We never thought the hedge could be taken up and replanted in such perfect condition. It looks as though it had always been in its present home. We thank you for all your efforts to make it a success for us.

E. B. MCLEAN, Washington, D. C.

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BELLE MEADE
FARM
BELLE MEADE
VIRGINIA